

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 047684

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ORIGIN SS-25

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NEA - MR. DAY

S/S -O: J. HOGANSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 047684

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, JO, XF

SUBJECT: DAMASCUS VISIT OF KING HUSSEIN

REF: AMMAN 1046, BEIRUT 1603, 1764

1. KING HUSSEIN SHOULD BE INFORMED THAT WE WERE RELIEVED AND DELIGHTED OVER THE RELEASE OF GALLAGHER AND DYKES. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PERSONAL EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT ASAD AND CHIEF OF STAFF SHIHABI WERE HELPFUL IN BRINGING ABOUT THIS HAPPY OUTCOME. MESSAGES OF THANKS FROM THE SECRETARY HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO ASAD AND SHIHABI, BUT KING COULD FEEL FREE TO TELL ASAD FROM HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE THAT WE ARE DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE OF SYRIAN EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD.

2. ALTHOUGH WE AGREE WITH ASSESSMENT CONTAINED BEIRUT 1603, WE PREFER THAT YOU NOT RPT NOT DRAW ON IT FULLY. REASON IS THAT, AS HUSSEIN HIMSELF SPECULATED, THE SYRIANS MAY BE FACING DIFFICULTIES FROM VARIOUS LEBANESE FACTIONS

SECRET

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PAGE 02 STATE 047684

AS WELL AS FROM CERTAIN FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS IN IMPLEMENTING

SYRIAN -INSTIGATED UNDERSTANDINGS. THERE IS A BEIRUT PRESS REPORT THAT SYRIA IS ON THE VERGE OF FORCING THE FORMATION OF A LEBANESE CABINET TO ITS OWN LIKING. THE POINT IS THAT WE DO NOT WANT HUSSEIN TO CONVEY IMPRESSION TO ASAD THAT THE U.S. WOULD NECESSARILY APPROVE EVERY SYRIAN ACTION OR ACTIVITY IN THE COUNTRY. WE HAVE TO BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL NOT TO GIVE IMPRESSION OF SUPPORTING A PROCONSULAR ROLE FOR SYRIA IN LEBANON, ALTHOUGH SO FAR SYRIAN MOVES HAVE APPEARED TO US REASONABLY CIRCUMSPECT AND CONSTRUCTIVE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SUGGEST THRUST OF YOUR REMARKS AIM TOWARDS ELICITING HUSSEIN'S IMPRESSIONS OF ASAD'S POLICIES, AS REGARDS NEXT MOVES IN THE UN, FOR EXAMPLE, AS WELL AS IN LEBANON. INGERSOLL

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